

Interviewed on April 3, 1987

Transcribed by Lori G. Robinson, August, 2001

This interview is conducted by Lapoint Elementary sixth grader, Lynette Christensen. The topic is the life history of Edgar Labrum.

Edgar Labrum (Edgar): My name is Edgar Labrum, I'm seventy-nine years old, and this is my home, here, that we're at now. It's April 3, 1987, and the subject is...

Lynette Christensen (LC): ...life history. This is Lynette Christensen, and I'm a student from Lapoint Elementary. This will be a part of an oral history project.

Edgar: Well I'm Lynette's great-grandpa, and I was born in Deep Creek the twentieth of January, 1908. We moved down to the vicinity of Roosevelt when I was six months old. Dad got a homestead just out of town a ways. We lived on a farm. Times was awful hard then. We didn't have much money, and we had to work hard.

My father was a farmer. His name is Ray George Labrum. He had three of us boys: two brothers older than I am, Lloyd and Morrell. Lloyd was the oldest; Morrell was the second one, and I'm the third one of the family. Us kids, we helped plant the gardens and take care of the stock and harvest the crops. We probably couldn't do very much while we was small, but as we got older, why, we done the work of a man in helpin' put up the hay and the grain and takin' care of things.

I went to school at the what they call the Wilson School just out of Roosevelt. It's now called Valley. The Valley Church House is where the schoolhouse was at that time. Later on, we moved into the brick schoolhouse just across the road from the Valley Church House where they've turned it into a cattle yard there now. I went to school in the grade school there at Ballard, and when I graduated from grade school, I went to the Duchesne County High School, which is northwest of Roosevelt. That's where the junior high school is now. When I graduated from school, I went to Salt Lake and took a course in auto mechanics and acetylene welding.

Later, when I come home, I went to work for the Ford dealer, here in Roosevelt, as a mechanic. I worked for him for about a year, and then I quit and went into business for myself. I had a garage and a service station and done mechanical work for about forty-two years 'til the time I retired in 1972. I started a-sellin' new cars in 1933. I sold the Chevrolet car, had the Chevrolet agency for two years, and then I give it back to the company and took on the Pontiac agency, and I had it up until from '36 till '72 when I retired.

Well, now I'll try to tell ya some of the things we done when we was growing up. We didn't have picture shows and televisions and radios in them days, so we had to make our own fun. The kids in the neighborhood, on Saturdays and Sundays, would get together and meet at one or the other's places, and we'd play ball and games. We'd go horseback riding out in the hills east of Roosevelt about two or three miles. We'd spend the day, lots of times, up there, hunting rabbits and climbing up and down the hill, and there was a big peak up there. We got a lot of fun in going out and climbin' up to the top of those peaks, see which one could get up there the first, then we'd roll rocks down and, and that's the kind of entertainment we had at those times.

We didn't have basketball games or rodeos to go to like they have now. Maybe on the Fourth of July, why, they'd have a few horse races and a rodeo kinda, buckin' horses and steers. We didn't do much roping at them days. I guess they thought that was too hard on the cattle or somethin'. But we had to get together and make our own entertainment. After growin' up, of course, we got away from a lot of those kid games and things that we done, and we'd go to playing baseball. That seemed to be the main sport.

In those days we had a movie house, here in Roosevelt, but it was silent pictures. They'd show the pictures on the screen, and then the pictures'd go off, and then there'd be writing come out on the screen, and you had to read that, and [it was] harder to find out what was goin' on. Nowadays they have this sound right along with the pictures, and as you're watchin' the pictures, why, you can find out and know what they're doing 'cause they have the sound there.

Then we didn't have a telephone, so we couldn't get on the telephone and call one another when anything happened, or when we wanted to do somethin', so Mother and Dad, if they wanted a message up to the neighbors, one of us kids would have to get on a horse and go up and tell 'em what they wanted.

In case of sickness, why, they'd have to come up to Roosevelt where we had one doctor, whose name was Dr. Martin at that time, and he took care of all the sickness. My Grandmother Harrison, which is my mother's mother, she was a midwife, and she went around with the neighbors and helped 'em when they were having children. We didn't have no hospitals or anything like that to go to. So times was quite hard.

Then, I remember when the First World War started and the United States went into war. On the Armistice Day, when the war was over, they declared peace. We were thrashing our grain out on the ranch, and we had an old steam engine to run the thrasher. Why, to thrash the grain, you had to put water in the boiler and then feed it coal or wood to get up steam, so you'd have the power to make it run. When they heard of the Armistice, why, there was only two or three cars in town, but the ones that had cars, they got in the cars, and they went out around in the country hollerin' and yellin' that the war was over. I remember when they came past where we was thrashing, why, the man that was runnin' the thrasher, he just shut it off and pulled the whistle open, which was run by the steam in the boiler, and we sure had a celebration that day that we'll never forget.

Lynette wanted to know if I had any sisters. Well, they was nine of us children in the family. There was one girl, just younger than I, whose name was Florence. Then they were a couple of boys, Verlyn and Clement, and another sister, whose name was Essie, and then they was two more boys: Kenneth and Lynn. Lynn, he was the youngest one of the nine of us. We, Mother and Dad, never had any children die until they were up around the ?. Lloyd, he died when he was fifty years old. Since then, why, the one sister, Florence, she died when she was havin' a heart operation, and my brother, Kenneth, he died later. He was the next to the youngest, and so there's about seven of us still living at this time. My oldest brother, Morrell, he's about eighty-one years old.

LC: What was the first car your family had?

Edgar: Well, we had an old Model T. I had a Model T what was called the 'stripped-down'

model. The body was off'n it, and about all we had was a frame and the windshield and steering wheel, and we had to sit on the gas tank for a seat. That was the first car that I had. We had quite a bit of fun with it. Every time we'd go around a corner, though, one of the back tires would come off, and we'd have to stop and put it back on the wheel and pump it up by hand. The first car that Dad bought was an old Maxwell. It was a touring car. It was second hand, and it didn't run too good, so he give it to my brother, Lloyd, and he run it 'til it wouldn't run anymore, and then he traded it off. But Dad bought him a Model T Ford touring car in 1924, and that's the car that we went to the temple in.

Dad and Mother went out to the temple at Logan to be sealed to one another, and we all went up in that. We didn't have paved roads like they have now. We just had the dirt road or a little gravel on 'em, so the roads was rough, and they twisted around up and down the draw. We didn't have a straight highway like we have, and as we was goin' down Daniels Canyon, I know, we got into a cloudburst. The water come down off'n the hill and washed the rocks and mud out into the road, and we had quite a time gettin' through that. It took us all day to get from Roosevelt to Salt Lake. Nowadays, it only takes a couple of hours or so.

So, you see, the times have changed. We have a nice two or three lane highway with pavement on it, and all the twists and turns is taken out, you might say, and we can go sixty, seventy mile and hour, where in the early days, with the Model T, we could only go maybe twenty to thirty miles an hour top speed, and then it pert' near shook you to death even at those speeds.

Then in '26, Dad got him a Chevrolet sedan, and that, boy, was just like gettin' out of a little car nowadays into a Cadillac. The sedan was so much better and rode so much nicer. The roads was a gettin' better at those times. We had a good graveled road, and later on, why, then they started a puttin' the oil on it and makin' the oiled roads which we have now.

[Lynette] wants to know what the girls done in them days with their spare time. Well, they didn't have too much spare time to waste around, but they would get together, and they would have little parties and play with their dolls and things and maybe go out, walk up and down the road. They were quite tomboys then. They liked to tease the boys and try and get into playin' ball and doin' the things that the boys was doin', but mostly, they stayed home and they'd help their mother take care of the younger children and do the washing and cookin' and housework.

In them days they had the old hand-operated washers which you had to stand by and work it back and forth with a handle in order to slush the clothes around in the water to get 'em clean. Lots of times they didn't have one of those; they just had a 'bout number twelve washtub and a scrubbin' board, and they'd have to put their water and that in the tub and their clothes and let 'em soak awhile and then rub 'em up and down on the scrub board, there, to get the dirt out. But the girls, they kept pretty, pretty well busy helpin' their mother doin' the housework and cooking for the men who were working out in the field when they was puttin' up the grain and the hay and plantin' their crops.

We never had any allowance like the kids have nowadays. We didn't know what allowances was. We were lucky if we got a nickel or a quarter on the Fourth of July, or maybe [for] a show ticket, which cost us ten, fifteen cents in them days. And, 'course, we didn't need much money 'cause it didn't cost much. It isn't like it is today; kids can't go out on a date or out on a party without havin', oh, ten, twenty dollars in their pocket and a nice, shiny car to drive in and lots of gas. They cover a lot of miles [too], where we could only maybe go two or three

miles 'cause we had to go on foot or ride our ponies when we was children.

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